

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 250907Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4174

S E C R E T CAIRO 5228

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS AMBASSADOR EILTS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (BAKER, HOWARD)

SUBJECT: CODEL BAKER: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SADAT

REF: CAIRO 5222

1. SUMMARY: SENATOR BAKER HAD MAY 24 MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SADAT DURING WHICH LATTER REVIEWED PRESENT STATUS OF ME SITUATION AND PROVIDED HIS OUTLOOK ON PROSPECTS FOR PROGRESS TOWARD SOLUTION OF ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM IN CONTEXT OF FORTHCOMING SALZBURG SUMMIT AND OF GENEVA CONFERENCE. SADAT INDICATED HIS HOPE SALZBURG WOULD PROVIDE CLARIFICATION OF US POLICY POSITION AND MENTIONED SOME POINTS THAT HE WOULD RAISE THERE (REPORTED SEPARATELY.) SADAT ALSO INDICATED HIS SERIOUS CONCERN ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN LIBYA IN LIGHT OF RECENT KOSYGIN VISIT. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT AND MRS. SADAT WITH VICE PRESIDENT MUBARAK RECEIVED SENATOR AND MRS. BAKER, TOGETHER WITH CHARGE AND MRS. MAESTRONE, ACCOMPANIED BY SENATOR'S TWO ASSISTANTS, TILLMAN AND BRANSON, AT HIS BARRAGES REST HOUSE, MAY 24.

3. SENATOR BAKER OPENED CONVERSATION BY
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BRIEFLY REVIEWING HIS VISITS TO TEL AVIV, AMMAN

AND BEIRUT, CONTRASTING THE STABILITY OF JORDAN WITH THE TOUCHY SITUATION IN LEBANON. AS FOR ISRAEL, WHILE HE COULD NOT POINT TO ANYTHING SPECIFIC, HE FELT THERE WAS AN INDICATION OF SOME FLEXIBILITY IN ISRAELI POSITION. COMPARING HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH ARAFAT, AND OTHER PALESTINIANS IN BEIRUT, WITH THOSE IN ISRAEL, IT SEEMED APPARENT TO HIM THAT AGREEMENT BETWEEN EGYPTIANS AND ISRAELIS COULD PROBABLY BE MORE EASILY ACHIEVED THAN ON ANY OTHER FRONT.

4. SADAT COMMENTED ON TRAGEDY OF ISRAELI OPPOSITION TO US POLICY AND POINTED TO CONFUSION WHICH EXISTS IN ISRAELI POLITICAL SITUATION.

5. RE LEBANESE PROBLEM, SADAT SAID HE WANTED TO HELP PRESIDENT FRANGIEH PUT END TO CURRENT CONFLICT WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC.## STABLE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PALESTINIAN PRESENCE THERE SHOULD BE AGREED UPON. SADAT SAID THAT, WHILE HE CONSIDERED ARAFAT A MODERATE, HE WAS A WEAK MAN PERSONALLY. HOWEVER, HE WAS ONLY PALESTINIAN LEADER WITH WHOM ONE COULD DEAL. IN THIS CONNECTION SENATOR NOTED THAT PALESTINIAN PRESENCE AT GENEVA CONFERENCE WOULD PRESENT DIFFICULT SITUATION. ISRAELIS WERE PREPARED NEGOTIATE WITH ARAB GOVERNMENTS, BUT NOT PLO. AS TO PLO ASPIRATIONS, HE WAS STRUCK BUT ARAFAT'S REPLY TO HIS QUESTION ABOUT WHAT LAND THEY DESIRED, NAMELY, "ANYTHING ISRAELIS WOULD GIVE UP."

6. ASKED WHETHER HE THOUGHT THERE COULD BE RETURN TO STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS, SADAT SAID ISRAELIS HAD REFUSED EVERYTHING US PROPOSED IN PREVIOUS EFFORT. WHILE IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO PRESENT AT GENEVA SOME SORT OF OVERALL PROPOSAL WITH GUARANTEES, WHICH COULD BE IMPLEMENTED IN STAGES, IT WOULD MEAN THAT US COULD NOT BRING ABOUT PEACE IN ME WITHOUT USSR, WHICH WOULD GIVE SOVIETS RENEWED ROLE IN AREA WITH INCREASED POSSIBILITIES

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FOR MISCHIEF-MAKING. IN REPLY TO BAKER QUERY WHETHER SPECIFIC BOUNDARIES COULD BE DEFINED IN SUCH A PROPOSAL, SADAT INDICATED THIS WOULD BE GOOD, BUT PROBABLY ONLY GENERAL LINES OF SOLUTION COULD BE SKETCHED. HE WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT 1967 BORDER WITH MINOR RECTIFICATIONS.

7. PROBLEM WAS, SADAT SAID, THAT US HAD NOT MADE ITS POSITION CLEAR. IF US POSITION AFTER POLICY REASSESSMENT REMAINS UNCLARIFIED, US POSITION IN ME WILL BE SERIOUSLY DAMAGED. HE AGREED WITH SENATOR THAT SOVIETS ARE NOT IN HURRY TO CONVENE MEPC.

8. CHANGING SUBJECTS, SADAT EXPRESSED HIS SERIOUS CONCERN OVER DEVELOPMENTS IN LIBYA IN LIGHT OF RECENT KOSYGIN VISIT. SOVIETS HAD AGREED PROVIDE LIBYANS WITH \$4 BILLION WORTH OF MODERN ARMS, EVEN MORE SOPHISTICATED THAN THOSE GIVEN TO SYRIA. THESE INCLUDED 2000 T-72 TANKS, THE NEWEST SOVIET MODEL, ADVANCED TUPOLOV TRANSPORT PLANES, AND LATEST MISSILES. MOREOVER, IT WAS NO SECRET THAT SOVIETS WERE CONSTRUCTING MODERN NAVAL BASE AT TOBRUK. SINCE LIBYANS WERE INCAPABLE OF HANDLING THIS SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT, SOVIETS WOULD DO IT FOR THEM. A HEAVILY ARMED LIBYA AND SOVIET CONTROL OVER 2000 MILE LIBYAN CASTLINE REPRESENTED THREAT TO EGYPT AND TO US.

9. AT CONCLUSION OF DISCUSSION, SADAT REITERATED HIS HOPE TO SEE NEW AMERICAN EFFORT

TO BRING PEACE TO ME AND TO HAVE IT ACHIEVE SUCCESS US DESERVED. SENATOR BAKER THANKED PRESIDENT SADAT AND CONCLUDED WITH REFERENCE TO HIS LONG RELATIONSHIP WITH PRESIDENT FORD IN CONGRESS AND ASSURED SADAT HE WOULD FIND HIM A GOOD MAN WITH SOUND AND INTELLIGENT JUDGMENT IN WHOM HE COULD HAVE FULL CONFIDENCE.

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MAESTRONE

NOTE BY OC/T: ##SENTENCE AS RECEIVED.

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, CODELS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975CAIRO05228
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750184-0067
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750518/aaaaapxo.tel
Line Count: 156
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 CAIRO 5222
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 APR 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <08 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CODEL BAKER: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SADAT
TAGS: OREP, PFOR, OVIP, US, EG, XF, (SADAT, ANWAR), (BAKER, HOWARD)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006